

**Virginia Preschool Initiative  
Guidelines for the Virginia Preschool Initiative Application  
2006-2007**

**Title of Program:**

Virginia Preschool Initiative for At-Risk Four-Year-Old Children

**Issued to:**

Commonwealth of Virginia City Managers, County Administrators  
and Division Superintendents

**Issuing Agency:**

Virginia Department of Education  
Office of Elementary Instruction  
101 North 14th Street, 24<sup>th</sup> floor  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

**Type of Funding:**

General Fund Appropriation by Virginia General Assembly

**Period of Funding:**

July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007

**Issue Date:**

April 7, 2006

**Submission Deadline:**

May 15, 2006

**Mail the signed certification page by May 15, 2006, to:**

Cheryl P. Strobel  
Virginia Department of Education  
Office of Elementary Instruction  
101 N. 14<sup>th</sup> Street, 24<sup>th</sup> floor  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

**E-mail the completed Excel application by May 15, 2006, to:**

Cheryl.Strobel@doe.virginia.gov

**Application/Guidelines/Budget:**

Application, guidelines, and budget information may be  
downloaded at:

<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/ElemM/early/preschoolinitiative.html>.

**Direct program inquiries and completed applications to:**

Cheryl Strobels, Early Childhood Specialist

Telephone: (804)371-7578

[Cheryl.Strobels@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Cheryl.Strobels@doe.virginia.gov)

**Direct budget inquiries and Excel spreadsheet questions to:**

Kirsten Olson, Education Finance Analyst

Telephone: (804) 225-2025

[Kirsten.Olson@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Kirsten.Olson@doe.virginia.gov)

## **Program Overview**

In January 1994, the Commission on Equity in Public Education adopted and endorsed four major programs as the core elements in their recommendations to the 1994 General Assembly. The recommendations, subsequently adopted by the General Assembly, focused on programs that had been shown to improve educational achievement. A preschool program for at-risk four-year-olds was one of those recommendations.

The 1995 General Assembly, through passage of the Omnibus Education Act (HB2542) and the Appropriation Act, reinforced all components of the 1994 package and provided for expansion of the initiative for at-risk four-year-olds. As of 2005-2006 state funds are available to provide comprehensive preschool programs to 100 percent of Virginia's at-risk four-year-olds who are not being served by Head Start.

Funding is calculated at an estimated \$5,400 per eligible child, with program costs shared by the state and local governments based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay. This funding calculation is based on the Governor's introduced 2006-2008 biennial budget, which is subject to change by the 2006 General Assembly.

Completed applications are due to the Department of Education by May 15, 2006, with grants to be awarded in July 2006. Programs must operate on a full-day or half-day basis for the entire 2006-2007 school year to receive the full state allocation. For a new program in the first year of implementation only, a program operating less than a full school year will receive state funds on a fractional basis determined by the pro-rata portion of a school year program provided.

The program will comply with the staffing standards required by Section 22.1-199.1C, *Code of Virginia*. The maximum class size will be 18 students. One teacher will be employed for any class of nine students or less. If the average daily membership in any class exceeds nine students but does not exceed 18, a full-time teacher's aide will be assigned to the class.

## Scope of Services

The purpose of the grants is to reduce disparities among young children upon formal school entry and to reduce or eliminate those risk factors that lead to early academic failure (see Appendix A).

To obtain state funding, localities must develop a written local plan for programs that includes five services:

1. Quality preschool education;
2. Parental involvement;
3. Comprehensive child health services;
4. Comprehensive social services; and
5. Transportation.

The legislative intent of the initiative is to establish a quality preschool education program for "at-risk" four-year-olds. Research, culminating in a legislative study, has defined the criteria for a quality program as those noted in Appendices A-C. Programs should be designed to meet these criteria.

Localities will align the curriculum with *Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning*. They establish a measurable range of skills and knowledge essential for four-year-olds to be successful in kindergarten. Localities are also required to use PALS Pre-K for literacy screening.

The purpose of the *Foundation Blocks* is to provide early childhood educators a set of standards with indicators of success for entering kindergarten based on scientifically-based research. They reflect a consensus of children's conceptual learning, acquisition of basic knowledge, and participation in meaningful and relevant learning experiences (see Appendix B).

Localities are expected to coordinate resources and funding streams to serve the greatest number of four-year-old children.

Funds will be disbursed by the Department of Education to localities to:

1. establish or expand quality, comprehensive preschool programs in public schools or community sites;
2. purchase quality preschool education programs and services for at-risk four-year-old children from existing providers;

3. expand existing quality programs to serve more children;  
and
4. upgrade existing programs to meet criteria for  
comprehensive, quality preschool programs to include new,  
unserved children.

Programs must provide full-day or half-day and at least school year services. First year programs operating less than a full school year shall receive state funds on a fractional basis determined by the pro-rata portion of a school year program provided. Children enrolled in the program must be four years of age on or before September 30 of the school year.

The Department of Education reviews preschool programs or centers operated by school divisions as a part of the pre-accreditation process. Instructional programs offered by public schools that satisfy compulsory attendance laws or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), vocational child-care programs, and extracurricular activities that are focused on single interests such as, but not limited to, music, drama, art, or foreign languages are exempt from the requirements of the Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers.

### **Application Requirements**

Authorizing legislation requires the chief administrator (city manager or county administrator), in conjunction with the school division superintendent, to identify a lead agency within the locality prior to submitting a proposal application on or before May 15, 2006.

Applicants must:

1. demonstrate willingness to provide a quality preschool education program that conforms to the guidelines and criteria outlined in Appendices A-C;
2. demonstrate collaboration and coordination with community agencies and groups identified by the lead agency as necessary for the successful delivery of comprehensive services to the children and their families;
3. develop and utilize selection criteria based on the community's definition of "at-risk." Appendix A provides information on risk factors that may be used; and
4. complete a grant application and submit it to the Department of Education by May 15, 2006.

### **Local Match Requirements**

The Appropriation Act states that a local match of funds, based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay, is required to receive state funds for this program.

### **Defining a Qualifying Program**

For the purpose of this initiative, a qualifying program is one that is supported through local dollars and meets, or can meet, the criteria for a quality preschool program for at-risk four-year-old children in school year 2006-2007.

State dollars may be used to:

1. Upgrade, complement, or expand an existing locally funded program to meet quality criteria;
2. Complement or expand a Title I or Head Start program to serve additional children; and
3. Establish a new program to serve additional children.

### **Local Funds**

#### **Cash Contributions**

Cash contributions are defined as local dollars that are:

1. In a program that meets, or can meet the criteria for a quality preschool program for at-risk four-year-old children in school year 2006-2007; and/or
2. New dollars, which are used to implement a program in school year 2006-2007 that meets the criteria for a quality preschool program for at-risk four-year-old children.

#### **In-Kind Contributions**

In-kind contributions are defined as cash outlays that are made by the locality that benefit the program, but not directly charged to the program. The value of fixed assets cannot be considered as an in-kind contribution. In-kind contributions are:

1. Limited to no more than 25 percent of the total local match requirement;
2. Justified in the program plan as necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient implementation of the program;

3. Verifiable from the recipient's records;
4. Not included as contributions for any other federally-assisted or state-assisted project or program; and
5. Not paid by the federal government or state government under another award.

### **Coordination of Funds**

State funds are to be used to create new programs, supplement, enhance, or broaden current services.

Localities should coordinate other funding sources in planning programs for four-year-old children. Some sources of funds include federal funds for Title 1, Head Start programs, and child-care subsidy programs such as Title IV-A.

Local plans must provide clear methods of service coordination for the purpose of reducing the per child cost for the service, increasing the number of at-risk children served and/or extending services for the entire year. Examples of these include, but are not limited to:

1. **Wraparound services** combine funds such as child-care subsidy dollars, administered by local social service agencies, with dollars for quality preschool education programs.
2. **Wrapout services** use grant funds to provide health, social services, and transportation within a setting that currently provides quality preschool education (e.g., child-care settings or schools).
3. **Expansion of services** use grant funds to purchase placements within existing programs, such as Head Start, which provide comprehensive services to at-risk four-year-old children.

### **Important Information About the Grant Application**

The signed certification form must be mailed by May 15, 2006, to the following address:

Cheryl P. Strobel  
Virginia Department of Education  
Office of Elementary Instruction  
101 N. 14<sup>th</sup> Street, 24<sup>th</sup> floor  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The completed Excel application file must be e-mailed by May 15, 2006, to the following address:

Cheryl.Strobel@doe.virginia.gov.

### **Submission Deadline**

All copies of the application must be received at the Department of Education by May 15, 2006.

### **General Instructions for Using the Microsoft Excel File**

Please go to: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/ElemM/early/preschoolinitiative.html> for complete directions on using the Excel worksheet.

### **Using Appendices A-C to Complete the Application**

Appendices A-C refer to information regarding the requirements of a quality preschool program and the Virginia Preschool Initiative.

#### **Appendix A:**

Risk Factors, Page 9

#### **Appendix B:**

*Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning*, Page 10

#### **Appendix C:**

Site Visit Instrument, Page 11



## **Appendix A**

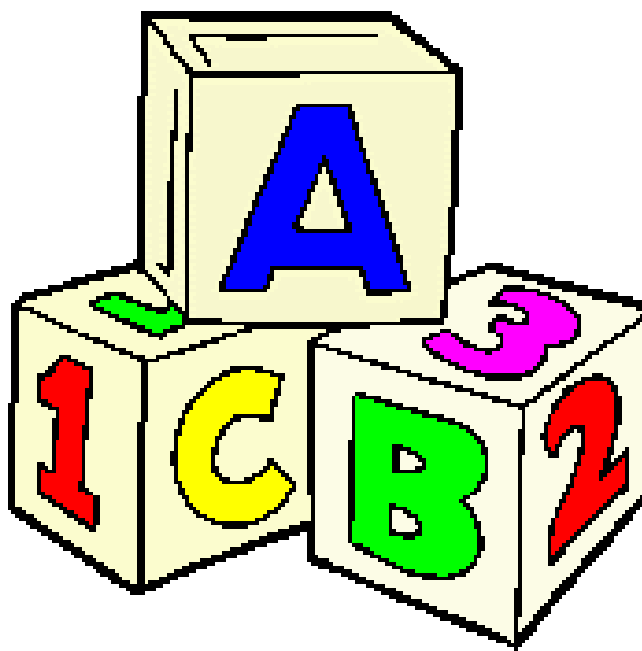
### **Risk Factors**

Localities will develop selection criteria based on their definition of at-risk. Listed below are sample factors that have been identified as possible risk factors.

1. The child lives in poverty.
2. The child is homeless.
3. The child's parents or guardians are school dropouts, have limited education, or are chronically ill.
4. The child's family is under stress as evidenced by poverty, episodes of violence, crime, underemployment, unemployment, homelessness, or incarceration.
5. The child has health or developmental problems including, but not limited to, developmental delay, low birth weight, substance abuse.
6. The child has limited English proficiency.

## Appendix B

### Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning



Prepared by  
Office of Elementary Instructional Services  
Virginia Department of Education

2005

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/Elem\\_M/FoundationBlocks.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/Elem_M/FoundationBlocks.pdf)

## Appendix C

### VIRGINIA PRESCHOOL INITIATIVE SITE VISIT INSTRUMENT

LOCALITY \_\_\_\_\_

Requirement	Is there sufficient documentation that this requirement is being met?	Documentation	Action taken (or to be taken) to fulfill requirements and/or improve in areas of concern. (Include timeline for completion.)
1. The locality will provide a high quality comprehensive preschool program for at-risk four-year-olds not served by Head Start.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Research-based, comprehensive preschool curriculum -Professional development plan for current year -Lesson plans -Classroom observation by consultant	
2. The program will align preschool curriculum with <i>Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning</i> and use PALS Pre-K.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Scope and sequence of curriculum -Documentation of alignment from locality or publisher	
3. The program will maintain a maximum group size of 18 children with a child/staff ratio of 9:1.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Class roster	
4. Programs not located in public schools will comply with the <i>Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-License from social services	
5. Children served will reach their fourth birthday on or before September 30th.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Student records or class roster with birth dates	
6. The program will be half-day (3 hrs.) or full-day (6 hrs.) and at least school-year (180 days).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-School year calendar -Class schedule	
7. The locality will develop and use criteria for eligibility.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Eligibility criteria form -Rank listing of students	
8. Program personnel will have the appropriate professional credential for the program site.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Copy of licensure for teachers	
9. The chief administrator (city manager or county administrator) in conjunction with the school superintendent will identify a lead agency.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Application	

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Is there sufficient documentation that this requirement is being met?</b>	<b>Documentation</b>	<b>Action taken (or to be taken) to fulfill requirements and/or improve in areas of concern. (Include timeline for completion.)</b>
10. The locality will develop a written local plan. The plan will include a description of these services: educational program, parent involvement, health services, social services, and transportation. Please attach a copy of the budget to the plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Detailed local plan to include each required component (See page 4 of the Guidelines)	
11. No participation fees will be charged to families.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Budget	
12. The required local match will be met. At least 75 percent of the local match will be cash and no more than 25 percent will be in-kind.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Budget summary -Budget narrative	
13. State funds will be used only for educational personnel and program requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Budget narrative	
14. The locality will submit interim and final reports.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-Interim report will be due in October -Final report will be due in July	
15. The locality will maintain a steering committee to coordinate with schools, child care providers, local social services agency, Head Start, local health department and other groups identified by the lead agency.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	-List of committee members and agency they represent -Dates of meetings or agendas or minutes/ notes from meetings	

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed - Virginia Preschool Initiative Consultant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed - Virginia Department of Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed - Local VPI Program Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date